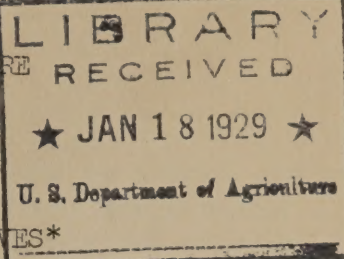


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CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FARMERS GIVE THEMSELVES*

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Now that the morning chores are done and father and the boys have come in from the barns and washed up, ready for dinner, and the turkey needs a little longer roasting, may we reflect for a few minutes on what farming people give themselves throughout the year that is worth prizing?

Well, the privilege of being your own boss is one of the big things in farming. To be your own boss is to adventure, to develop your own mind. You may fail, of course, in your adventure, but again you may succeed; and, what a thrill there is in attaining success out of your own thinking and planning! About 7 out of 10 farmers make a reasonable success in farming--a profit of \$500 to \$5,000 a year--and these figures hold for the last six years in farming in the United States. It is a big, fine feeling to be your own boss, and you are more fully your own boss on the farm than anywhere else.

The next big thing farmers give themselves which is the envy of all industrial and commercial people is the opportunity to associate with their children until they have grown to manhood and womanhood. Father and son do the chores together; they till the corn and cotton together; they make maple sugar or cane sirup together. They go to town together, plan the farm work and speculate on a future career together; they tramp the fields and forests and fish the streams together. They hunt partridges and rabbits, pick berries, and are daily companions for 15 to 20 years of life. These are rich years for father and son.

The city man leaves his family in the morning and goes to office. He gets back home, usually after 6 o'clock at night. He sees his family only for a little while at night and in the morning. How he envies the farmer the opportunity to know and enjoy and associate with his children! It means a lot for a boy and a girl to have the companionship of a father throughout their early life, and who so admires the father as do his children? To have the respect and admiration of one's children is among the finest things in life.

*Radio address broadcast from Washington, D. C., over a network comprising 15 of the largest stations, December 25, 1928.

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Then, farmers give themselves freedom. They work out of doors. Their work changes from day to day and with the seasons. They feel the sunshine and wind and rain and know their meaning to the growing plants and animals. They know the smell of fresh-plowed earth, the beauty of ripening fields of wheat, the promise of orchards in bloom, the kindly welcome of a dog. I recently saw 3,500 workers in a pineapple cannery. Some 500 of them were seated on stools alongside a moving belt which carried crushed pineapple pulp past them. Their duty was to pick out the little black specks of pineapple that get into the pulp in crushing.

Hour after hour, day after day, week after week, these 500 men and women were picking out specks--picking out specks. How would you like to exchange your job of working in field, garden, and orchard, and with cattle and poultry and plows and planters and combines, with those who, in a crowded room beside an endless belt spend their time in picking out specks? And a lot of factory work is just like that!

Another big thing farmers give themselves is the joy of being creators. There are four primary sources of wealth in the world--the soil, the sea, the mines, and the forests. Out of the soil this year the farmers in the United States gleaned more than \$12,000,000,000 worth of gross income. This is 5 times as much income as we get, on the average, per year from all the gold and silver, and copper and iron, and coal mines and oil wells in the United States put together; 11 times as much, on the average, as we get from the forests; and 100 times the income the United States gets, on the average, annually from the seas.

There is joy in taking the bare, brown earth and aided by seed and sun and rain, creating on it wheat and cattle, fruit and poultry, honey and milk, to the value of twelve billions of dollars. It thrills one to be associated with such an enterprise.

Another thing the farmer has given himself, of which all of us get the benefit, is efficiency. The American farmer is an efficient farmer. On a man-to-man basis, the American farmer uses more horsepower, he tills more acres and produces about $2\frac{1}{3}$ times as much, on the average, per man as does the farmer in England or Germany, $3\frac{1}{2}$ times as much as the farmer in France, and 6 times as much as the farmer in Italy. On the whole, the efficiency of the American farmer has increased about 35 per cent in the last 10 years. The American farmer today is easily producing all the food and fiber the population of the United States will consume and pay a fair price for, notwithstanding that farm labor population and acreages have been considerably reduced within recent years. By better feeding methods and management the farmer has increased the milk yield of all the dairy cows in the United States, on an average, of 1,000 pounds per cow within the last 10 years. Now, that is going some!

The American farmer is giving himself a high standard of living these days. We are gradually getting away from the idea that we ought to skimp and barely get along and save our money so we can buy another farm, and are adopting instead the idea that a good home and a good living are among the

biggest things in life. In farming we spend 90 per cent of our life in or within sight of the home. Why should it not be an attractive home, one that the children enjoy and love to think of in memory and come back to in after years?

The table is the place where the whole farm family meets three times a day in social intercourse. Big things for the farm and family are discussed. There character is analyzed and builded. How desirable is a gracious meal! How it invites hospitality, the finest flower of rural life, and who can set himself such a table as the farmer? Vegetables and fruits are his, poultry and eggs, butter and milk, ham and bacon, mutton and beef, wild nuts and honey and, if he wants it, game from the field and fish from the streams and lakes--and the table graced with flowers from mother's plantings.

Yes, the farmer is giving himself a higher standard of living. The old buckboard has been displaced by the automobile and auto truck. There are good roads everywhere; the schools are better; there is music in the home. The farmer keeps in touch with the world through the radio. The best music is his; the most talented speakers stimulate and entertain him. There may not be great wealth in farming but what a living there is in it! It is a real Christmas present the farmer gives himself when he sits down in his own home at his own table or dreams by his fireplace these days. And still better days are ahead.

Probably the greatest Christmas gift farmers are giving themselves is increased education of the whole family. Satisfaction of the mind are the greatest and most lasting satisfactions of life. The farmer has given himself the agricultural extension service and agricultural vocational schools. He has also given himself farmers' institutes and much reading matter in the way of farm journals and daily papers. These are all mind-stimulating agencies, and when people begin to think and read they begin to make progress.

In cooperation with county and State and Federal Government, the farmers employed over 2,500 technically trained college men and 1,100 technically trained college women to advise with them on farm and home matters this last year. These technically trained men and women, known as county agricultural agents and home demonstration agents, are supervised and directed by the State colleges of agriculture; and, back of these agents are over 5,000 full-time research workers in agriculture and home economics of the United States Department of Agriculture and State experiment stations. American farming is one of the largest users of research workers and technical information of any industry in the whole United States.

Stimulated by extension agents and by their own desire, farmers and their families put on 1,500,000 demonstrations, showing better methods in agriculture and home economics, in the United States this last year; 3,600,000 farm men and women counseled with extension agents at their offices on better methods of farming and home making. Together, agents and farmers have organized, in all, over 3,500 farmers' cooperative marketing associations, which

did a business last year of more than \$200,000,000, at a profit to the farmer of nearly \$9,000,000.

But, more awakening and stimulating than these things were the 636,000 rural public meetings held, with 21,000,000 farm people in attendance, where agricultural and home matters were discussed by experts. You see, the American farmer is one of the alert men of the earth. He isn't thinking only of cattle and plows these days.

Another educational thing the farmer did during the year, of great significance to both the present and the future, was to encourage over 650,000 of his boys and girls to take part in the 4-H clubs carried on by the cooperative extension service. In this work, each boy and girl taking part does some worth-while thing, like growing an acre of corn or cotton, feeding a litter of pigs, or raising a flock of poultry or a garden in the most approved, up-to-date way. In this work, the youngsters are brought in contact with the best farmers and business men and the technically trained agents of government. They do a part of the world's work. Their general interests are stimulated. Their vision is broadened.

It was one of these 4-H club boys, Clarence Goecke, 13 years old, of Marshall County, Iowa, who raised the grand championship steer exhibited at the Chicago International Livestock Show this year, in competition with exhibitors from the whole United States and Canada. That steer weighed 1,150 pounds and was auctioned off for \$7 a pound. Some Christmas present for Clarence! Don't you suppose Clarence believes in Santa Claus? And what training for a boy! You didn't have a chance to belong to a 4-H club or a Smith-Hughes vocational school when you were a boy, but you are giving your children this chance.

And now, lastly, the greatest thing of all, the farmer has enlarged the one-time narrow, crooked trail that led from his farm up to the agricultural college of his State into a broad, paved highway where farmers and their wives, 2,000 to 8,000 strong, annually travel together to attend farmers' week at the college. The farmer and his wife are attending the State and national fairs, too, by the hundred thousand. The farmers' children by the ten thousands are taking courses in vocational schools, while tens of thousands more are taking full four-year courses in colleges and universities. Over 70 per cent of these young people are returning to the farm or engaging in closely allied pursuits. Who else is giving himself more this Christmas morning than the farmer?

May the day be full of happiness and the year to come be heaped with blessings for all who live by the plow and work with their hands!

